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The Cruel Sister

version by David Webb

There lived a lady by the North Sea shore
Two daughters were the babes she bore
One grew as fair as in the sun
So cold, dark, grew the elder one

A knight came riding to the ladies' door
He travelled far to be their wooer
He courted one with gloves and rings
But the other he loved above all things

"Oh, sister, sister won't you walk with me
To see the ships sail o'er sea"
And as they walked the windy shore
The dark girl pushed her sister o'er

Sometimes she sank, sometimes she swam
Crying "Sister, reach to me your hand
Oh sister, sister please let me live
And all that's mine I'll surely give

"It's your own true love I want, and more
That thou shalt never come ashore"
And as she floated like a swan
The salt sea bore her body on

Two minstrels walked by the windy strand
They saw her body float to land
They made a harp of her breast bone
Who's sound would melt a heart of stone

They took three strands of her yellow hair
And with them strung this harp so rare
They took this harp to her father's hall
There to play before them all

But when they set the harp upon a stone
It began to play alone
The first song sang a doleful sound
"The bride her younger sister drowned"

The second string, when this they tried
"In terror sits the black haired bride"
The third string sang beneath their bow

"And now her tears will surely flow"

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